

Pre-decisional – do not distribute – for internal federal agency use only

Federal Offset Proposal – Mainstem Actions for 2001 FCRPS Summer Operations Draft 6/26/01 (2)

Rationale

[note: to be revised based on federal attorney call Tuesday]

The 2000 NMFS Biological Opinion and the 2001 Federal Agencies FCRPS Operating Plan recognizes that the Federal Agencies may, through adaptive management, adjust FCRPS operations over time, as there are deteriorating or improving changes in circumstances and/or unforeseeable situations. The action agencies are considering options for summer 2001 mainstem fish passage spill due to the current drought and power market driven situation affecting FCRPS operations and consistent with the 2001 operations plan and criteria. The following proposal for Offset Mainstem Actions is based on the premise that the Federal Agencies are unable to provide full biological spill this summer due to deteriorating water supply conditions. The biological objective of summer spill would be to aid Lower Snake River Chinook as well as other summer migrants moving through the hydrosystem this year. This proposal establishes a framework for achieving comparable and immediate biological benefits through other means.

This Mainstem Actions proposal differs from 2001 actions taken to “jump-start” recovery through high priority projects funded by BPA in order to provide for immediate and measurable benefits to listed and threatened fish throughout the Columbia Basin. The high priority projects were designed to provide one-time funding to implement actions consistent with the 2000 NMFS and FWS Biological Opinions while implementation planning was underway. High Priority projects are being initiated to address water quality and quantity, improving fish passage in tributaries and enhancing or protecting fish habitat.

This Mainstem Actions proposal also differs from the BPA 2001 Actions Proposal to address impacts of power emergency on primarily on listed anadromous fish, although it did also consider impacts on non-listed anadromous and resident species. The BPA 2001 Actions Proposal focused on shorter-term actions that can be implemented immediately and addressed only tributary flows; tributary habitat; tributary diversion screening; and fish stock relocation/outplanting.

Process

The action agencies solicited proposals for alternative actions from states and Tribes between June 15 –22, 2001. Alternative action proposals from external parties are summarized in Attachment 1. The action agencies that operate the FCRPS will consult with NMFS and FWS to agree upon a set of mainstem actions.

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Priorities and Categories of Actions, in order of priority

1. Actions with immediate benefit for listed summer migrants (Snake River fall Chinook), including (A) operational and (B) other actions.
2. Actions with immediate benefit for other summer migrants, including (A) operational and (B) other actions. Please note that these actions would also benefit listed in-river migrants in the Lower Columbia River.
3. Actions that would benefit listed summer migrants in the longer-term.
4. Actions that would benefit other summer migrants in the longer-term.

Reporting

The action agencies responsible for implementing Offset Mainstem Actions will report on the action taken as part of the 2001 Progress Report for implementing the 2000 NMFS and FWS Biological Opinions in September, 2001.

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1. Actions with immediate benefits for listed summer migrants (Snake River fall Chinook).

A. Operational Actions:

Actions	Expected Benefits	Potential Consequences	Costs
Dworshak* draft below 1520; specific operational scenarios to be evaluated by TMT	Extends flow and cold water benefits to enhance SR Fall Chinook survival to Lower Granite; see NMFS analyses	Risk to winter operations and chum operations; risk to spring refill.	

B. Other Actions:

Actions	Expected Benefits	Potential Consequences	Costs
Increase Northern Pikeminnow Bounty in Snake River	Reduces predation		Approx. \$300,000

** There may be a transmission constraint that restricts BPA's ability to deliver flows*

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2. Actions with immediate benefit for other summer migrants

Notes:

- **These actions will also benefit listed in-river migrants in the Lower Columbia River.**
- **The Federal Agencies will also consider NWPPC recommendations regarding non-listed summer migrants.**

A. Operational Actions:

Action	Expected Benefits	Potential Consequences	Costs
Operate Columbia System to augment Lower Columbia flows Note: Does not include Albeni Falls due to court order	Enhance flow augmentation for Hanford Reach Fall Chinook and listed in-river migrants.	Risk to winter and chum operations; risk to spring refill, depending on project. Depending upon specific project, other potential consequences include impacts to Tribal cultural resources and fall kokanee operations.	

B. Other Actions:

Action	Expected Benefits	Potential Consequences	Costs
Increase Northern Pikeminnow Bounty in	Reduce predation		Approx. \$300,000

Lower Columbia River			
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3. Actions that would benefit listed summer migrants in the longer-term

Action	Expected Benefits	Potential Consequences	Costs
Non-native predator control – operations and/or incentives	Reduce predation on passing juvenile salmon.	Requires coordination with states and Tribes; may have public opposition	Approx. \$1 million
Dworshak Hatchery – modify current water supply system and rehabilitate System 1 reuse	Provides greater flexibility in managing cold water releases for SR Fall Chinook; enhances hatchery survival		Approx. \$3 million

4. Actions that would benefit other summer migrants in the longer-term

Action	Expected Benefits	Potential Consequences	Costs
Acceleration of various NMFS and FWS 2000 BO measures	Accelerates BO projects	Requires additional funds and/or capability; could be constrained by BPA borrowing authority and/or additional appropriations	
Non-native predator control – operations and/or incentives	Reduce predation on passing juvenile salmon.	Requires coordination with states and Tribes; may have public opposition	Approx. \$1m.
Access Storage at Owyhee	Enhance flows in Lower Snake	Refill impacts; possible toxic sediments	

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Attachment 1 – Summary of External Comments on Alternative Actions

Action	Suggested By	Response
Improve tributary spawning and rearing habitat	Northwest Requirements Utilities; Public Power Council; PNCG	BPA – tributary actions covered under 2001 Actions Proposal
Allow spill through market purchases of energy and capacity	American Rivers, CRITFC, et al.	BPA
Reduce harvest	Public Power Council; PNCG	NMFS
Reduce predation	Public Power Council; PNCG	Being Considered
Improve strategies for releasing smolts from barges	PNCG	The Corps has evaluated and implemented several actions to improve smolt release from barges: increased size of barge exit openings (reduces stress and injury); determined best location for release below Bonneville (no benefit for releases further downstream); releases are made in river current and at night to reduce predation.
Enhance monitoring and evaluation efforts to better understand species' needs	PNCG	BPA
Reduce reliance on hydro power through solar energy and fuel cells	Miai Genaux (individual)	BPA
Secure water releases from Hells Canyon	Miai Genaux (individual)	NMFS

